

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE 50th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, HELD AT THE
CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON W.C.1. ON FRIDAY, SATURDAY &
SUNDAY 16th, 17th and 18th APRIL 1954.

SESSIONS:- 1st day 11.00 a.m. - 6.0 p.m.
2nd day 11.00 a.m. - 5.0 p.m.
3rd day 11.00 a.m. - 5.0 p.m.

CHAIRMAN:- R. AMBRIDGE
VICE CHAIRMAN:- E. GUY
TELLERS:- F. LAWRENCE and J. LESTOR.

REPORT OF THE 50th EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

Resolution :- Fulham Branch. "That no members shall serve on the E.C.
for more than three consecutive years". LOST 400

FULHAM. All members should have the opportunity to work as an
E.C. member, instead the E.C. is at present elected by best known
names. Members who are competent but not widely known are excluded
by the present method.

BLOOMSBURY. The branches put forward the nominations, they have the
opportunity to ask other members who have not yet served on the E.C.;
why do they not do so?

Resolution: FULHAM branch. "That this conference affirms rule 17 that
the E.C. is a supervising body, and therefore has no power to lay
down policy".

Addendum: Paddington Branch "add i.e. no power to institute action not
previously agreed to in principle by the Party". CARRIED 35 - 33.
as a sub.res. 43 - 27

PADDINGTON. The branch was concerned with the principle; an instance
was when the EC had committed the Party by a resolution agreeing
to send messages of support to strikers, the E.C. had made a new
departure to which the Party as a whole was not agreed.

CAMBERWELL. The Party has agreed to support workers by its pamphlets etc;
the E.C. is up against an attitude that the Party should rise above
the class-struggle. If the action of sending messages to strikers is
a departure, it is not a bad one.

BALING Conference should confine itself to the principle involved, the
resolution and addendum had so far not been dealt with; the discussion
was irrelevant.

E.C. MEMBER Several recent E.C.'s had departed from general policy in
that they allowed members to attack the Declaration of Principles in
writing and speech; earlier E.C.'s would have been down on these
members like a ton of bricks.

PADDINGTON. Only quoted an instance and the branch considered that the
E.C. departed from policy on that occasion; when the E.C. sits it
does so not as private members but as a representative body of the
Party; this addendum will ensure that they do so.

FULHAM (to the resolution) Like Paddington Fulham considered that
the E.C. had no business to pass a resolution committing the party
to supporting strikes. The job of the Party was to propagate for
socialism and not to run around supporting reform measures on behalf
of workers. Messages sent to Trade Union Headquarters would not be
transmitted to workers.

E.C. MEMBER. The Party had laid down that it would support strikes when
they were in line with working class interests; there was a change in
form in this instance, the E.C. had tied itself to a particular
form of action.

ST. PANCRAS. Rule 17 already states what the powers of the EC should be.
The Branch will abstain from voting. The resolution and addendum should
have been put as items for discussion.

CAMBERWELL. Trade Union action is an aspect of the class struggle; Marx
stated that if the workers did not struggle on the industrial field
they would not be fit to struggle politically.

FULHAM. The action of the EC was not what the Party desired - the Party
has no part in Trade Union struggles.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE reported that delegates had arrived from

Manchester and Glasgow branches without credentials, and asked for permission to sit. Carried by a large majority.

GROYDON asked if the branches in question had made out their form "C" if these delegates are allowed to sit it would be a flagrant violation of the rule, the rule was there to be complied with and is broken year after year; we should either apply the rule or get rid of it. MANCHESTER Credentials were here but did not know about the form "C". EALING. It was not a question of one form "C" but two for the last two quarters of 1953.

BLOOMSBURY. Considered that conference should be lenient.

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ATTENDANCES. No action.

3. BRANCHES, MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANISATION.

(a) BRANCHES

CAMBERWELL asked if Swansea Branch was represented.

SWANSEA. stated that the Branch was fairing well; they were experiencing the same difficulties as other branches. The fact that two languages were used also presented a peculiar problem-the Branch was working among people who were more concerned with Methodism than Marxism. It was hoped that in the near future it will be possible to produce party literature printed in Welsh. (The delegate then greeted the conference in Welsh).

(b) MEMBERSHIP

No action.

(c) CENTRAL BRANCH

CENTRAL BRANCH SECRETARY. reported that the voting papers returned by central branch members were very few; this year 110 papers were sent out and about one fifth returned.

(d) GROUPS report was read to conference as it was submitted too late to be included in the B.C. report. Two new groups were formed towards the end of 1953 one being at Romford and the other at Dundee; the former being 10 members strong and the latter comprising 7 members.

(e) INTERNAL PARTY JOURNAL.

No action

BLOOMSBURY. The content of the Journal could be much improved; attacks on individuals and personalities had transended the purpose of the Internal Party Journal.

SOUTHBEND. The purpose of the Journal was to thrash out the policy of the Party through controversy in order that the case may be better put from our platforms.

(f) PREMISES

ISLINGTON Requested information as to whether the loan to the party for the purchase of Head Office had been paid up.

TREASURER reported that there was £500 outstanding; but this was necessary as it had been agreed that the loan should be paid at £2. per week.

(g) BOOK DEPARTMENT.

No action

(h) BRANCHES NOT REPRESENTED AT DELEGATE MEETING.

No action

(i) HEAD OFFICE ADMINISTRATION.

No action

(j) MEMBERSHIP. Item for discussion PADDINGTON BRANCH.

"Does the discussing or writing about controversial subjects impede the propagation of socialism?"

Resolution - Hackney Branch. "That this conference instructs the EC not to interfere with the freedom of members writing in journals other than the "Socialist Standard" unless the same reasonably comes within the provisions of rule 33 i.e. that such conduct is detrimental to the interests of the Party".

Amendment - Fulham Branch "Delete all after "Socialist Standard".

amendment LOST 5-74

resolution CARRIED 53 - 21.

FULHAM The reason why the Branch moved the amendment was that its application in this instance was too severe.

RAY was opposed to the amendment; they considered that Fulham was seeking to allow anything that was anti-party.

WESTHEAD Opposed the resolution even if socialist ideas could appear in other journals it was leaving the stable door open; a dangerous measure - there were no other socialist journals.

PADDINGTON The resolution was unnecessary - the Party had never debarred members from writing in other journals provided they were not the Party's views; members write in Trade Union journals.

RESOLUTION - Leyton Branch "That this conference instructs the EC to adopt the principle that no member shall write in any paper or magazine either directly or by context or place of publication matters detrimental to the Party, and to consider such cases on their merits".

Lost 28-40

LEYTON Members should try to get as many articles in as many papers as possible, the resolution was a moderate one; if a break is put on members they are being prevented from propagating socialist ideas.

E.C. MEMBER The idea that members would be able to put the party position in other journals was dangerous; the party position has never been put elsewhere; if it were submitted to another paper it would be refused.

E.C. MEMBER What of the provinces? There are no outlets for socialist propaganda. There were also papers that were not openly political but regularly print articles that could be used by the socialist, but members have been prevented from writing in other papers. Is it wrong to think that there are members waiting the opportunity to attack the Party, but there are members who can write material that would not be suitable in the "Socialist Standard".

SOUTHEND The Party is frightened of something it cannot avoid. Socialists will write on every possible occasion.

BIRMINGHAM The Leyton resolution is better worded and is in line with Rule 33; because of the EC resolution preventing members writing in other journals, the branch supports the Leyton resolution.

GLASGOW (city) Would have no regrets if the resolution is carried.

LEWISHAM Whether carried or not the resolution would not change the situation, the branch does not think that the EC can interfere with members who wish to write; the resolution is pious, what of letters that appear in the press.

WICKFORD The EC was in favour of members belonging to the Rationalist Press Association therefore these members could write in that journal and others.

HACKNEY The branch was not concerned with letters but articles provided they expressed a point of view with circumspection; there is no reason why the conference should not support the resolution.

PADDINGTON (to the item for discussion) There should be controversy in both speaking and writing; but there is no need to stick to dogma; a balance can be made and controversy can be included making the propaganda more lively and attractive.

CAMBERWELL We have only one case; some members are looking for controversy. The views we put from the platform must be the view that are accepted by the democratic decision of the Party.

LEWISHAM It is underhand of Paddington branch asking that we allow controversy when there are members in direct opposition to the Declaration of Principles. The D of P is printed on the back of our literature; it is the party's position.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION. "Does the discussing or writing about controversial subjects impede the propagation of socialism?"

PADDINGTON If controversy does not impede the propagation of socialism within the Party, how can it do so outside? What the branch was trying to do was widen the scope of our propaganda and eliminate dogma.

MEMBER Our propaganda has been controversial for many years on the question of Trade Union action, backward countries, neither of these are answered in "Questions of the Day", and different points of view have been put from the platform; it is dishonest of those members who say that the Party only puts one point of view from the platform.

ST. PANCRAS Controversy in our propaganda is to be desired and the Party case leaves enough room for this; let's get on with the job as we did before, the party has reached the point where the argument will not be resolved, let us get back to being a socialist political organisation.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION CONTINUED - 4 -

HAMPSTEAD It is purely a rhetorical question; if you try to put controversial points you are heading for disaster. This all springs from a dissatisfaction of progress. There is scope for controversy against the anti-socialist. The D of P operates successfully and has done so, so far.

E.C.MEMBER It is humbug of Turner to accuse others of dishonesty and then to state that he disagrees with the D of P and yet remains in the Party. We should look to discipline or we shall become just a mob.

FULHAM We want socialism as much as anybody and we see that controversy will assist our propaganda.

MANCHESTER We boast from the platform that no one can enter the Party without agreement with the D of P. What happens if a new member comes in and then finds that the D of P is being attacked. Let us have controversy but what will happen if each member puts a different point of view. It can only cause confusion. If there is a fundamental disagreement in the D of P then conference should move a resolution to delete the appropriate clause.

EALING If we did as Fulham suggested we should stop all propaganda until we have sorted the thing out and then present our audience with a new look.

SOUTHEND For lld we can buy a newspaper and find enough to sling mud at capitalism without slinging it at each other, there is plenty of scope for propaganda, let us not criticise each other.

BLOOMSBURY Discontinue the internal Party journal; all this was foreseen when it was brought into being. The mass of written and spoken controversy that has gone on has put the Party's case in the background; it is now time that we had a sense of proportion about controversy.

S.W.LONDON The introduction of 'Forum' was a good thing, it allows all members to get in on a discussion instead of cliques trying to put on to the Party their own ideas.

Resolution (moved from the floor) Moss and Sumner (St. Pancras) "That this conference recommends that the EC consider ceasing the publication of 'Forum'".

KELVINGROVE We should regret to see the end of 'Forum' - it affords members a chance to develop. The cessation of the Internal Party Journal would be in the favour of those who wish to suppress discussion.

E.C.MEMBER The ending of 'Forum' would be a good thing - at present it is harmful to propaganda.

PADDINGTON Only those members who are afraid of discussion want to end 'Forum'. It should be continued, let us put an end to personalities in the Internal Party Journal.

MANCHESTER Since "Forum" has been in print apathy in the Party has become more evident.

EALING We should return to Party "News and Views".

BLOOMSBURY Members write in Forum and it is they who will put the matter right.

Resolution (from the floor) Cottis and Grisley (Southend) "That the question be put".

LOST 13-42
LOST 24-26.

BLOOMSBURY You will never eliminate personalities if Forum continues; GLASGOW The Internal Party journal has not been used but abused, but it would be wrong to end the journal; we must always discuss; a more enlightened generation will come from our activities.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE reported that 50 delegates were sitting representing 26 Branches, branches not represented were:- Eccles, High Wycombe, Nottingham, Palmers Green.

Resolution - Mostyn (Islington) Langston (Camberwell) "That the report be adopted"

Agreed

(k) FUNDS APPEAL

No action

(l) CENTRAL ORGANISORS REPORT

No action

4. PROPAGANDA.

(a) PROVINCIAL PROPAGANDA TOUR

Resolution - MANCHESTER "That a provincial propaganda tour be organised for the summer of 1954".

MANCHESTER There was still plenty of scope for propaganda in Manchester.

There was no reason why tours should not be carried on.
A tour of Swansea should be considered ; at present Wales
is the heart of Nationalism.
GENERAL ORGANISER. The Party would like to send speakers to as many of
the provinces as possible, but there was difficulty in obtaining
speakers.

(b) OUTDOOR MEETINGS.

No action.

(c) SUNDAY EVENING MEETINGS IN HEAD OFFICE.

BLOOMSBURY These meetings should be prepared very early in the year
to avoid failure in the future. They give the young speakers
valuable experience; older speakers should be prepared to assist
wherever possible.

(d) MAY DAY RALLY

CAMBERWELL Asked why Trafalgar square was not used by the Party, we
try to spread our May Day Propaganda as widely as possible, in every
large open meeting place in London.

(e) B.B.C. BROADCAST Letter received from High Wycombe together with
a resolution. The B.B.Cs reply was read to the Delegates.

Resolution 9 on the Final Agenda.

RESOLUTION - KELVINGROVE "That statements from the platform stating
or implying that the SPGB does not take part in the class struggle be
considered as being action detrimental to the party's interests".

Amendment - KELVINGROVE "Delete the words 'or implying'".

Carried 53-19.

Sub. Res. Carried 60-13.

KELVINGROVE our attitude is a scientific one and the class struggle
is an integral part of our case; to remove the class struggle from our
case would mean to tear the guts out of it.

PADDINGTON. The policy of the Party is to take part in the class
struggle therefore the branch supports the resolution.

BLOOMSBURY We are opposed to the resolution as the machinery in existence
can deal with all such cases.

LEWISHAM We support this resolution, opponents of the party would use
it against us if not carried; we must carry this resolution.

GLASGOW. We cannot oppose this resolution - it is a safeguard.

PADDINGTON. We are not concerned with the validity of the resolution but
whether or not members have been saying this from the platform.

MEMBER This is witch-hunting; no actual case has occurred - the resolution
is seeking something else.

KELVINGROVE The resolution should be incorporated into the rules.

Resolution - CAMBERWELL "That Party speakers at public meetings shall
put only the Party's case and not raise issues which are
controversial amongst Party members.

Amendment - EALING "Add the words 'and for which there is no agreed
Party attitude'".

Amendment - S.W. LONDON "That Party speakers put nothing from the
platform which is not consistent with the Party position, nor shall
they put personal points of view as to give the impression that they are
the views of the Party"

Carried 50-25

As a sub.res. CARRIED 50-25.

S.W. LONDON. The amendment was moved to clarify the resolution (i.e.) that
speakers should make it clear to audiences that their own personal points
of view are not necessarily those of the Party.

KELVINGROVE It is necessary that this precaution should be made.

MANCHESTER The party has the means at hand to deal with these cases; the
Resolution is a waste of time; heretic hunting similar to the war
between the Catholics and the Protestants.

PADDINGTON If this resolution is passed members will only be able to quote

the Declaration of Principles.

5. EDUCATION The classes organiser comrade Wilmott reported that an economics class had commenced with only a small attendance but the class maintained an interest in those who attended. Comrade Hampson reported that the writers class had been successful.

ITEMS OF CORRESPONDENCE A letter of fraternal greetings was read to the conference from comrade R. Frank of Austria.

CONFERENCE ADJOURNED FIRST DAY AT 6.p.m.

COMMENCED SECOND DAY AT 11.00 a.m.

AMENDMENTS TO RULES.

RULE 1. ST. PANCRAS "Insert on line 8 after the words "Rule 11" the following 'After examination of the applicant'".

CARRIED 53-12.

RULE 2. BIRMINGHAM AND S.W. LONDON. "That the words 'official due stamp' in line 3 be deleted, and the words 'signature of branch treasurer' be inserted".

LOST 16-54.

RULE 2. ST. PANCRAS. "Delete in line 7 the figure '13' and insert the figure '8'. Delete all after the words 'Branch Secretary' on line 8 and insert the following; 'and a further notice sent after 5 more weeks have elapsed. If after the expiration of 28 days from the despatch of the second notice no satisfactory explanation is received, the member may be lapsed by the branch and shall not be allowed to join any Branch whilst those arrears remain. Should the address of a member in arrears be unknown, such member may also be lapsed'".

Lost 14-61.

RULE 2 CAMBERWELL "Delete in lines 5/6 the words "or for any other reason that may be deemed satisfactory by the Branch" and insert the words 'or loss of employment through sickness or accidents'".

Lost 3-66.

RULE 9. BIRMINGHAM "Delete Rule 9 and replace as follows; 'Branches shall forward dues to Head Office at the beginning of each quarter at the rate of 4d per member per week'".

CARRIED 64-10.

RULE 9 S.W. LONDON(1) "Delete 'purchase due stamps from the' and insert 'Remit dues to'".

LOST 12-59.

RULE 9 S.W. LONDON(2) "Delete 'except those excused under rule 2'".

LOST 1-66

RULE 12 BLOOMSBURY "Delete in line 7 the words 'automatically from the next highest on the list of unsuccessful candidates in the previous ballot' and insert the words 'By ballot'".

LOST 10-64

RULE 12 EALING "That the whole of the present Rule 12 be deleted and the following substituted "That the EC shall consist of 14 members, elected annually. Voting shall be on a regional basis. Each region shall elect one or more members to the EC according to its size. A member shall only be nominated for one region. The composition of the regions and the number of E.C. members which each region elects shall be reviewed in the E.C. report to every third annual conference. A member of less than six months standing shall not be eligible for candidature. Vacancies occurring on the E.C. up to the 30th of September shall be filled automatically from the next highest on the list of unsuccessful candidates in that region in the previous ballot. Vacancies occurring on the E.C. after the 30th September shall remain vacant until the annual election unless four or more members lapse or resign.

LOST 8-58.

RULE 16. PADDINGTON "That rule 16 be abolished"

LOST 16-58.

RULE 17. PADDINGTON AND FULHAM "Delete the words 'appoint all Party Representatives in debate' and insert 'approve all party representatives in debate'".

LOST 17-61.

HACKNEY "Add 'to be appointed from a rota drawn up by the
five committee".

LOST 20-56.

5.

ST. PANCRAS "That the first sentence of the rule be amended to
read as follows:- 'Any member may be nominated to speak for the Party,
but the E.C. shall, at the request of a branch, call upon a speaker to
undergo an examination by a committee appointed by the E.C.'".

LOST 17-38.

RULE 20 PADDINGTON. "That rule 20 be abolished and the following rules
amended accordingly; 8,14,15,18,18,26,32 and 33

LOST 27-47.

RULE 22 HACKNEY "That rule 22 be amended to read as follows: 'Each branch
shall be entitled to send three delegates to the Annual Conference
irrespective of the size of the Branch. Delegates must have been members
as least six months preceeding the conference; delegates shall not
vote on matters arising from the agenda but shall take full notes of the
proceedings. The E.C. shall then circulate to all branches a report of
the conference discussions not later than six weeks after the said
conference, together with a ballot paper containing all resolutions and
amendments which shall be voted on at a special meeting to be held by
each branch within four weeks of the receipt of the report. The Ballot
committee shall add the total votes in respect of each resolution and the
decision made on the basis of a simple majority."

LOST 35-41.

RULE 26 DARTFORD. "Delete in line 4 the word "six" and substitute the
word "line"."

LOST 25-48

RULE 26 HACKNEY "That the following be added to rule 26. 'A two thirds
majority shall be required to make a decision effective'".

LOST 14-58

PARTY ORGANISATION AND MEMBERSHIP.

RESOLUTION - BELLING (no. 4, on the Final Agenda).

BELLING In view of the voting on the amendments to rule this resolution
automatically falls to the ground.

RESOLUTION - HAMPSHIRE (no. 7 on the Final Agenda) "That in view of
the ineffective method of dues collection, the Party consider a new
method of dues collection".

LOST 14-61.

There was no discussion on this resolution.

Item for discussion (e)

GLASGOW. "The necessity for Party speakers and writers to conform to
the declared object and principles of the Party".

Glasgow delegate in opening to the item said it would prevent anybody
departing from the policy of the Party.

BLOOMSBURY asked what moved the Branch to place this on the Agenda.

GLASGOW delegate in replying, as confirmation of the Party's ruling.

PADDINGTON asked for a ruling on an item for discussion on which they
had placed a resolution, which the chairman would not accept.

CAMBERWELL moved "next business".

CARRIED 22-17.

FULHAM supported the spirit but suggested that members already are
allowed a certain elasticity; restrictions may stop members from
writing.

SWANSEA Could not understand why members are opposing the D of P after
50 years and felt that the principles should be accepted.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (f) "New Speakers Test".

HAMPSHIRE wanted to know whether the present test was the older new
one; it was a war time measure; members are competent to judge whether
others could speak.

ST. PANCRAS It is more important for people to speak than to have a test.

SWANSEA The Branch needed speakers but were unable to take the test. With-
out speakers there could be no activity.

WEST HAM Older speakers never took the test; if members made a wrong
statement they could be dealt with by their branches.

The chairman then read the EC resolution of the 3rd meeting of the S.W.L. (via) The undormentioned decisions taken at various times were read to the EC. (a) 1936 Conference recommendation: "That the EC prepare a list of questions to be put to comrades anxious to speak on the Party platform." (b) 1940 E.C. resolution "That no meetings be held without sanction of the Propaganda committee." (c) 1941 Delegate meeting resolution supported the continuation of the examination of Party speakers. (d) 1945 Delegate meeting resolution supported the continuation of the examination of speakers.

RESOLUTION S.W.LONDON "That the new speakers test be continued"

CARRIED BY A LARGE MAJORITY

S.W.LONDON The test was a safeguard.

ST.PANCRAS The Branch was in a similar position to Swansea, the presence of an experienced member should be sufficient.

PADDINGTON The test could be improved, 50 members had passed the test but only 16 were speaking for the Party. The speakers classes did not impart platform manner to members.

HAMPSTEAD asked if S.W.London were in favour of the old or new test.

CAMBERWELL Branches should use their own discretion.

CROYDON were prepared to accept the majority decision.

E.C.WIMBOR The test is a useful safeguard.

Resolution - HAMPSTEAD "That the EC be asked to clarify the position regarding the new speakers test".

W.LING The resolution was not 'specific enough'.

S.W.LONDON There is not a rigid set of questions. (resolution carried with one dissentient).

RESOLUTION - 12 Lewisham "That this conference affirms that all printing done by the party should be undertaken only by accredited trade union firms"

CARRIED 49-32

Addendum- HACKNEY BRANCH "Add 'accredited in this sense means not merely a registered trade union organised by employers'".

Amendment - S.W.LONDON "Delete all after 'only by' and insert 'by the London Society of Compositors' or printing and kindred trades Federation fair list printing firms".

LEWISHAM moved the resolution because of the action of Paddington Branch in ordering their printing from a non-fair list firm. It is in the interests of the working class to support these activities. We cannot place ourselves in the position of black-legging or supporting employers unions.

PADDINGTON In their view there was no principle involved, all employers were the same.

DARTFORD pointed to the occasion of the King's death when R.E. Taylor refused to print an article for the "S/S". It was the compositors who acted against the wishes of their union who censured them.

WEST HAM pointed to the small printer not on the fair list and also to printers outside London; they had a similar set up to the LSC.

SOUTHEND opposed the resolution, it felt that it was a moral argument. The Branch was concerned with price only.

FULHAM The position is absurd - we should not be limited to the anti-working class activity of the trade unions.

S.W.LONDON We are essentially a working class party, other firms are prepared to use sweated labour. We agree that the workers must struggle on the industrial field, we must therefore support the resolution.

WICKFORD was not opposed to trade unions but socialism is our task. STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE REPORTED 56 delegates present representing 26 branches. Not represented Birmingham, Eccles and Palmers Green.

RESOLUTION - PADDINGTON "That this conference rules that the Party are not bound to give its printing to firms that are on the Trade Union fair list".

Lost 28-52

RESOLUTION - moved from the floor -HAMPSTEAD "That this conference recommends the EC to arrange for the drafting of part of the "Socialist Standard" in advance, to enable them to give contributors notice as to the articles required"

CARRIED 26-3

HAMPSTEAD It would help the Editorial Committee, the "S/S" was not as good as it had been pre-war. Then there were regular writers on their own subjects.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE suggested that writers preparing to write articles

inform the committee in order to avoid duplication by other writers.

FOR DISCUSSION (g) ELECTORIAL ACTIVITY

MEMBER This was a most important function as it provided the main out-
let for the selling of party literature.

HAMPSTEAD We cannot make socialists at election times; it seems that the
days of the outdoor platform are coming to an end.

AGENCY WAS GRANTED TO DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING AS THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
WOULD NOT BE PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DAY.

RESOLUTION PADDINGTON. "That this conference instructs the EC to
publish a special number of the "S/S" in September to mark the
anniversary of its first publication. The issue to contain articles
on the development of the Party and of socialist theory, as well as
important and interesting contributions from past numbers. The issue
to be illustrated and well designed and printed. There shall be at
least 10,000 copies to be sold at a price that will cover the expense.
All subscribers to receive a copy with out additional payment. To ensure
that the September "S/S" is worthy of the occasion preparations are to
be made at once for its publication".

Amendment - KELVINGROVE "Delete the words 'to be sold at a price that will
cover the expense. All subscribers to receive a copy without additional
payment' and insert 'the words 'to be sold at the current price'".

CARRIED 43-5

Amendment EALING BRANCH "Delete the words 'to be sold at a price that will
cover the expense'".

CARRIED 48-20

Amendment EALING BRANCH "Delete the words 'there shall be at least 10,000
copies'".

CARRIED 42-33

KELVINGROVE Subscribers should not have a cheap edition.

EALING The Branch was not adverse to losing money on this venture but in
their 10,000 copies could not be sold.

FULHAM The party would probably lose £250 and the money could be put to
another purpose.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE We should ask for funds for the 50th anniversary, we
should have the full amount and the stocks could be used in the future.

CAMBERWELL Branches should discuss the whole matter, contact newsagents
and propose a sale or return system.

HIGH WYCOMBE There should be 12,000 copies.

E.C. MEMBER It is up to the membership-they should pool ideas and show
enthusiasm.

DARTFORD There should be a re-iteration of the statement on war.

HAMPSTEAD The issue should comprise of extracts from the best articles
in the old standard.

ELECTORIAL ACTIVITY CONTINUED SUNDAY third and last day.

LEWISHAM An attempt should be made in the future to canvass the whole
of the constituency instead of part of it; there should be centres for
canvassing.

PADDINGTON Canvassing is only part of the election; the reason why only
part of the constituency was covered was because of the lack of support
from members. There should be a system whereby those people who took
the "S/S" regularly should be supplied with Election literature. Voters
are prepared to argue on their doorsteps contrary to popular belief.

MEMBER It was silly and dangerous to say that outdoor speaking was
finished; it is most important.

GLASGOW We regard the sales of the "S/S" as most important, and much
better than arguing on the doorstep; voters may not agree in an argument
on the doorstep but would have a better chance to study in private. We
should try on every occasion to sell the literature.

RESOLUTION - DARTFORD & HAMPSTEAD "That this conference recommends the
E.C. to consider the formation of a literature canvassing class in order
that the Party may be better equipped for any future election"

CARRIED BY A LARGE MAJORITY

DARTFORD. Canvassing is most important; it is the personal contact that
plays the greatest part in getting our ideas over.

HAMPSTEAD A class is necessary in order to instruct members how to
canvass; it will not be like selling vacuum cleaners

BRISTOL VICARY PL. Item for discussion (h) Kingston Branch

MEMBER informed the delegates that comrade Vicary is wrongly assumed to
be responsible for the plan - he is in no way associated with it.

KINGSTON The scheme provides an opportunity for greater publicity, and although the plan conflicts with rule 28, the plan could be amended, it should be placed before the Delegate meeting where the pros and cons could be studied.

RESOLUTION KINGSTON & SOUTHEEND "That this conference recommends the EC to further consideration of the 'Bristol Vicary Plan'".

Lost by a large majority

FINANCE Master form 'C' which the chairman read to the conference.

ISLINGTON The figure of £500 for premises and the figure in the EC Report were incorrect.

CAMBERWELL There were branches whose finances were not entered.

MANCHESTER Much of the confusion was due to bad organisation and the lack of reports from branches.

HAMPSTEAD Asked why such large amounts of dues were being waived.

HACKNEY The reason why there branch showed high amount of dues waived was that the Branch was situated in an area where unemployment was heavy, added to the fact that the branch had rather a lot of old aged pensioners on its books; the branch had not been unduly lax.

RESOLUTION S.W.LONDON "That this conference is of the opinion that the master form 'C' be prepared once a year".

CARRIED BY A LARGE MAJORITY

S.W.LONDON. It was better to have a once yearly form as the Delegate meeting would allow insufficient time to prepare.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE There had been considerable difficulty in keeping the branches up to strength. The committee said they would approach the EC with a view to getting outstanding accounts waived.

(This in connection with socialist Party of Ireland).

ORGANISATIONS ABROAD Overseas secretary reported that during the period that he had served in this position he had tried to build up an organised contact with people and organisations abroad, and at one time had a sizable correspondence list. Members had come forward to assist but slowly the contacts had been lost, some of which had ceased to function vis. The International revolutionary conference, a Swedish journal "Equal", a Dutch journal "Flame" a South African Paper "Forum" which for three years reprinted articles from the "S/S". There had been a contact Evaline in Germany. Contacts in Mauritius and Malta were no longer in line with the Party case and others in Italy and Holland. Three contacts had been linked up in the West Indies. There were ex-members in Rhodesia and Bulawayo. The Australian Party was not now active, and the activity of the Canadian Party was sporadic. The New Zealand Party was to all intents split in two, Wellington and Auckland, and comprised of some twenty members. The WSP consisted of between 70/80 members and in the main activity emanated from Detroit and Boston - the New York Local was dead.

MANCHESTER asked after comrade Thorburn now in New Zealand.

OVERSEAS SECRETARY Comrade Thorburn had done much to liven up the Auckland Branch, which, of the two branches, was now the most active.

LEWISHAM asked if the D of P had been translated into other languages. and the overseas secretary replied that it had been translated into French, German and Esperanto; the Canadian Party had done much in the way of translating articles into french.

CAMBERWELL commented on the work done by the overseas secretary and asked whether he would reconsider his resignation from this post. The overseas secretary replied that he had taken on other tasks and was handing over his post to comrade Coster and hoped that members would give him every assistance.

ORGANISATION resolution 5 on the Final Agenda.

SOUTHEEND "That the EC be instructed to supply all branches, books with duplicating leaves for use in connection with all branch business thus ensuring a complete record being retained".

LOST 18-52

SOUTHEEND In view of the mix up of correspondence a bound book would be an advantage and also for reference purposes; they could be kept and would safeguard correspondence.

RESOLUTION SOUTHEEND "That this conference instructs the EC to go into the whole matter of supply and distribution of membership cards, and allot this task to a specific body. It should be made clear that cards should be issued for a specific year before the expiration of the previous year".

CARRIED 52-16.

Amendment - Hackney "After the word 'body' insert the words 'and also keep an up to date record of membership'". Cd.45-21.

SOUTHEND The position regarding the distribution of membership cards was deplorable; year after year several letters have had to be written in order to obtain new cards; this year four letters had been written.

ITEM FOR DISCUSSION (b) HAMPSTEAD BRANCH

"Should a member who states disagreement with the D of P be charged with action detrimental".

RESOLUTION - HAMPSTEAD "That this conference expresses the opinion that a member who states disagreement with the D of P should be charged with action detrimental to the Party. LOST 13-43.

HAMPSTEAD We have a straight forward view; we must deal with these disagreements with the D of P no matter where it is stated. It is detrimental; the members should get out.

CAMBERWELL This kind of activity undermines the Party; we must have a statement on this matter, the only way to oppose the Party is from outside not boring from within.

PADDINGTON It is nonsense to say that members who disagree are opposed to the Party; how can the D of P be changed if they are not discussed.

SWANSEA There are two planes of reference; it is fairly obvious that we must have principles; we signed and accepted them when we joined, they can be altered, on the platform it is wrong to oppose the D of P - it would be suicide. The D of P is based on Marxism; there is nothing wrong with the disagreement and discussion.

The chairman then read the 1949 conference resolution

"That contrary to the E.C.'s decision this conference positively asserts that any member holding views contrary to the D of P does by holding such views constitute action detrimental to the interests of the Party". (the voting on this resolution in 1949 was lost 29-50)

LEWISHAM Opposed the resolution; did not think we were in the position to take this step. Detrimental is when a member goes over to the other side or puts the Party's case in a bad light; there are two factions in the Party and one or other will prevail; the opponents to the D of P have not so far shown where the D of P is wrong; given enough time they will hang themselves; but there is a possibility that we are wrong. The opposition are not prepared to move a resolution expressing their opinion. They should of their own volition go out; they have had plenty of time to discuss the matter.

GLASGOW There is enough elasticity in the D of P for members to work upon; they should put their case in writing or it is sabotage; up to date there have been no improvement in the D of P since 1904., it has survived all criticism.

HACKNEY Advised members to read rule 33. Hampstead are trying to frame a guide or device to get members out; the D of P can be altered, what of the phrase "master under our banner".

PADDINGTON Were concerned that such a resolution should be put to the Party. How can the D of P be criticised without speaking about it. It is a ridiculous situation that will gag everybody; such a position calls for a Senator McCarthy to set up a committee to watch all members.

MANCHESTER The resolution can become the groundwork for heresy hunting, the party has weathered 50 years of storm, it is big enough and tough enough to weather this storm. The Party is sound and these people will in time, realise that their views are unfounded. There is machinery in the Party for members who disagree to thrash out their disagreements, if they cannot then agree they must get out.

PADDINGTON There are many different ways of stating disagreement. The resolution makes the distinction of members who state disagreement in the branch or merely to other members. It is not a simple black or white position of agreeing or disagreeing with the D of P; members could agree with seven principles but would want to alter

the eighth. It would be far better if the merits of the principles could be discussed. Supporters of the resolution prevent views from expanding after coming into the Party; the resolution over-simplifies the position.

BLOOMSBURY No one has stated from the platform disagreement with the D of P we should wait until it happens and listen to the arguments.

SOUTHERN The D of P is something that cannot be changed it may be done someday, this action does harm to our propaganda.

FULHAM If the D of P is good it will withstand all attacks; it is disgusting to hear the discussion and only worthy of Izvestia; who is afraid of discussion?

E.C. MEMBER The resolution is premature. We have not yet heard real disagreement with the D of P; if they can be altered let them show us how; let them put the amendments before the next delegate meeting or conference; let us hear of this after the matter has been dealt with then; at present it is doing harm to our propaganda.

E.C. MEMBER The resolution was moved because the EC have not been dealing with the matter. Controversial subjects must not be allowed in public. It is difficult to understand why these people stay in the party.

E.C. MEMBER Concerned with the principle of discussion; we have never heard any discussion of the D of P; discussion is the life-blood of the party; those who disagree with the views should state their case in black and white.

E.C. MEMBER We must leave room for discussion not only for those who are 100% against the D of P but for those who have a different disagreement. A political party cannot function with too much controversy. The "S/S" may suffer if the D of P is brought into disrepute outside. It seems that some members signed the D of P whilst they disagreed with them; the real trouble is that some members do not know what the Party case is. We must make it clear to new members what the Party stands for, many are not politically mature when they enter the Party, there is trouble when they discover that active older members are opposed to the D of P; the D of P are the same as in 1904; they are not absolute but relative and must remain whilst capitalism remains. The resolution is wrongly worded it should have said that those members should be asked to resign, failing that, action should be taken.

FULHAM People joined the party for socialism, now it seemed they joined for clause 6 of the D of P.

Addendum - Hackney Branch "add" and judged in accordance with the rule 33".

Lost by a large majority.

HACKNEY - The addendum will mean that discussion will be possible.

LEWISHAM Vote the resolution down. Let members put their points in writing without endangering the freedom of members.

S.W. LONDON A bad resolution - it bars discussion; its only application can be when disagreement is stated from the platform.

ST. PANCRAS How would members who disagree with violence be dealt with. Clause 6 implies that force could be used. Some members will not support the use of force.

MEMBER Members who accuse others of attacking the Party or boring from within are putting a very unsound position, members are trying to make the Party more socialist; if there is a possibility that the D of P are wrong there would be no possibility of discussion. The Party case is put from the platform. If disagreement means leaving the Party how can there be discussion - who else but members can say whether the D of P are wrong.

HAMPSTEAD There are no greys - it is a black or white position, neither are the D of P a bible, if members think they signed a bible they should get out; progress to socialism cannot be speeded up and it is the members who are dissatisfied with progress who are really the enemies of the Party.

Before the conference closed, one of the members of the Irish delegation addressed the conference, he spoke of the position in Ireland, of the difficulties that confronted them, he closed his address with a message in Irish sending fraternal greetings to socialists the world over.

ADJOURNMENT of the 1954 conference was agreed to at 5 p.m. on a motion from Fulham and Camberwell.